

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-17, and 20-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 8-11, 16-17, 21, 24-27 and 32 are amended, claims 2-3, and 18-19 are canceled, and claims 33 and 34 are new.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 3, 11-13, 19, and 27-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that claims 3 and 19, which depend on claims 1 and 17, further recite "first conveyance roller." The Office Action goes on to assert that the first conveyance roller is the conveyance member, which has already been recited in claims 1 and 17.

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's recommendation. Therefore, the rejection is made moot. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C §102

Claims 1, 2, 6, 17, 18 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,580,033 to Sakurai (hereinafter "Sakurai"). Additionally, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 17, 18, 21, 22 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,002,913 to Pawlik et al. (hereinafter "Pawlik").

Specifically, the Office Action asserts that Sakurai discloses a fixing member (1) disposed to be in contact with a fixation medium (P); a pressuring member (2) disposed to face the fixing member (1); and configured to press the fixation medium (P) against the fixing member (P).

Sakurai does not teach, nor suggest, the conveying unit comprising "a first conveyance roller; and a plurality of second conveyance rollers disposed along the conveyance direction

of the fixation medium, and each disposed to face the first conveyance roller to support and convey the fixation medium. Instead, Sakurai teaches "a fixing device [that] has first and second rotatable members for holding there between and conveying a recording material to fix an unfixed image on the recording material; and drive means for rotating the first and second rotatable members," (column 10, lines 25-29). Therefore, there is nothing in Sakurai that teaches the plurality of second conveyance rollers disposed along the conveyance direction of the fixation medium.

Based on the arguments presented above independent claims 1 and 17 are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested, that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

With respect to Pawlik, the Office Action asserts that Pawlik discloses a fixing member (12) disposed to be in contact with a fixation medium(S); a pressuring member (14) disposed to face the fixing member and configured to press the fixation medium against the fixing member (12); a conveying unit (30) configured to convey the fixation medium that has passed through between the fixing member (12) and the pressuring member (14); a conveyance member (34) configured to convey the fixation medium (S), and configured to be in contact with the fixation medium on a surface that is opposite to a surface where the fixing member contacts with at a position that is downstream of the fixing member (12) with respect to a conveyance direction of the fixation medium and is upstream of a conveyance position where the conveyance unit conveys the fixation medium. We respectfully traverse the rejections.

Pawlik does not disclose a first (downstream) end portion of a guide piece is disclosed on a line that passes a contact portion between the conveyance roller and a downstream side pinch roller and a second (upstream) end portion of the guide piece.

Based on the arguments presented above, independent claims 1 and 17 are in condition for allowance. Additionally, dependent claims 5-6, 10, 21-22 and 26 are dependent either directly, or indirectly, from independent claims 1 and 17. Therefore, the dependent claims are also in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections.

III. Claims Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3, 11, 19 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakurai in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,258,815 to Nakagawa et al. (hereinafter "Nakagawa"). Additionally, claims 4 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakurai in view of Japanese Patent No. 05-273881 to Sawai (hereinafter "Sawai").

Based on the arguments presented above, independent claims 1 and 17 are in condition for allowance. Furthermore, dependent claims 3, 11, and 27 depend either directly, or indirectly, from independent claims 1 and 17. Therefore, the dependent claims are also in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's assertion that claims 7-9, 14-16, 23-25, and 30-32 contain allowable subject matter. Additionally, the Applicant acknowledges that claims 12, 13, 28, and 29 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 4-17, and 20-34 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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